MARVEL
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THE HIGH REPUBLIC
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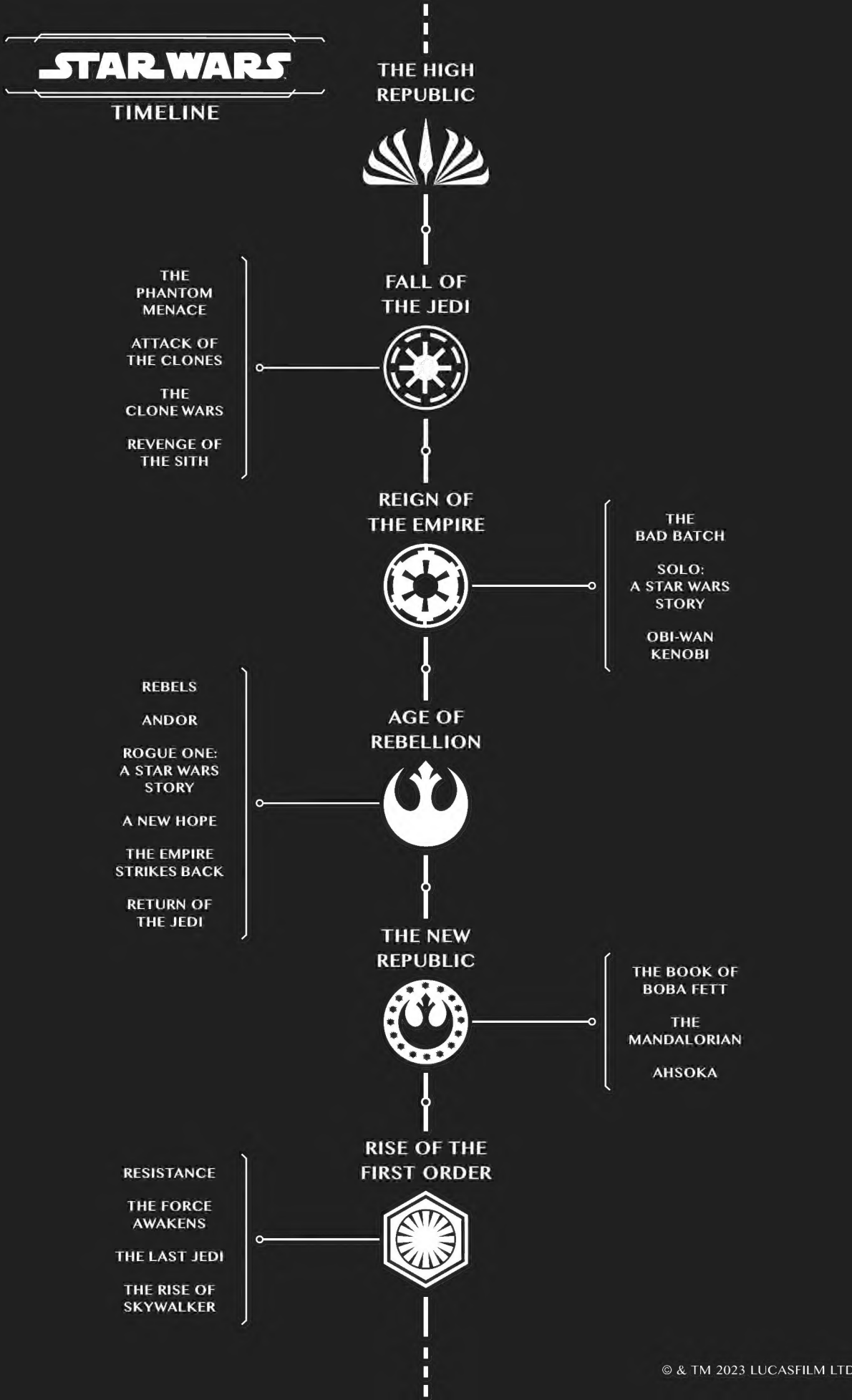

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THE HIGH REPUBLIC
CHILDREN OF THE STORM
CHAPTER 3: THE TAKING OF THE ATARAXIA

Hostilities between the Republic and Hutt Cartel have temporarily ceased now that Hutt Administrator Skarabda has attacked and killed an envoy of the fledgling Nihil regime.

Former Nihil Tempest Runner LOURNA DEE *is now on the run from the Republic and the Hutts, trying to escape on board the stolen Jedi cruiser, Ataraxia.*

But working with Hutt skiff-fighters, the Defense Coalition starcruiser Gios is moving to intercept before Dee can jump to hyperspace, with Jedi Master Keeve Trennis leading the charge.

But is Keeve distracted by the revelation that her former master Sskeer might still be alive on the other side of the Nihil's impenetrable stormwall....?

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THEN.
THE TRITON SYSTEM.
ONCE UPON A TIME, A JEDI MASTER AND HIS MESS OF A PADAWAN TRAVELED TO OETRAGO TO HELP COMBAT THE FOREST FIRES THAT WERE RAVAGING THE PLANET.
TOGETHER, THEY HELD BACK THE FLAMES UNTIL THE BIRDS AND BEASTS OF THE FOREST COULD ESCAPE. THE HEAT WAS INTENSE...
...ESPECIALLY FOR AN APPRENTICE WITHOUT FLAME-RESISTANT SCALES.
UHHH... SSKEER...
NOT LONG NOW, KEEVE.
THE FORESSST IS ALMOSSST CLEAR.
ALMOSSST.
BLEEEET

WHAT IS IT?
A DROWAN CALF, CAUGHT IN THE BLAZE. HOLD THE FLAMES.
ME? ALONE?
I HAVE FAITH IN YOU, MY PADAWAN--
--AS DOESSS THE FORCE.
HURRY... PLEASE...
THE TRANDOSHAN KNEW SHE COULD DO IT EVEN IF SHE DIDN'T.
AFTER ALL, SHE'D HAD A GOOD TEACHER.
SSKEER!
SOME MIGHT SAY THE BEST.

THE KIND OF JEDI WHO ENSURED NO ONE GOT LEFT BEHIND.
WHO INSISTED THAT EVERYONE WAS WORTH SAVING...
...NO MATTER HOW BIG...
...OR SMALL.

IT WAS A LESSON THE PADAWAN NEVER FORGOT.

FOOM

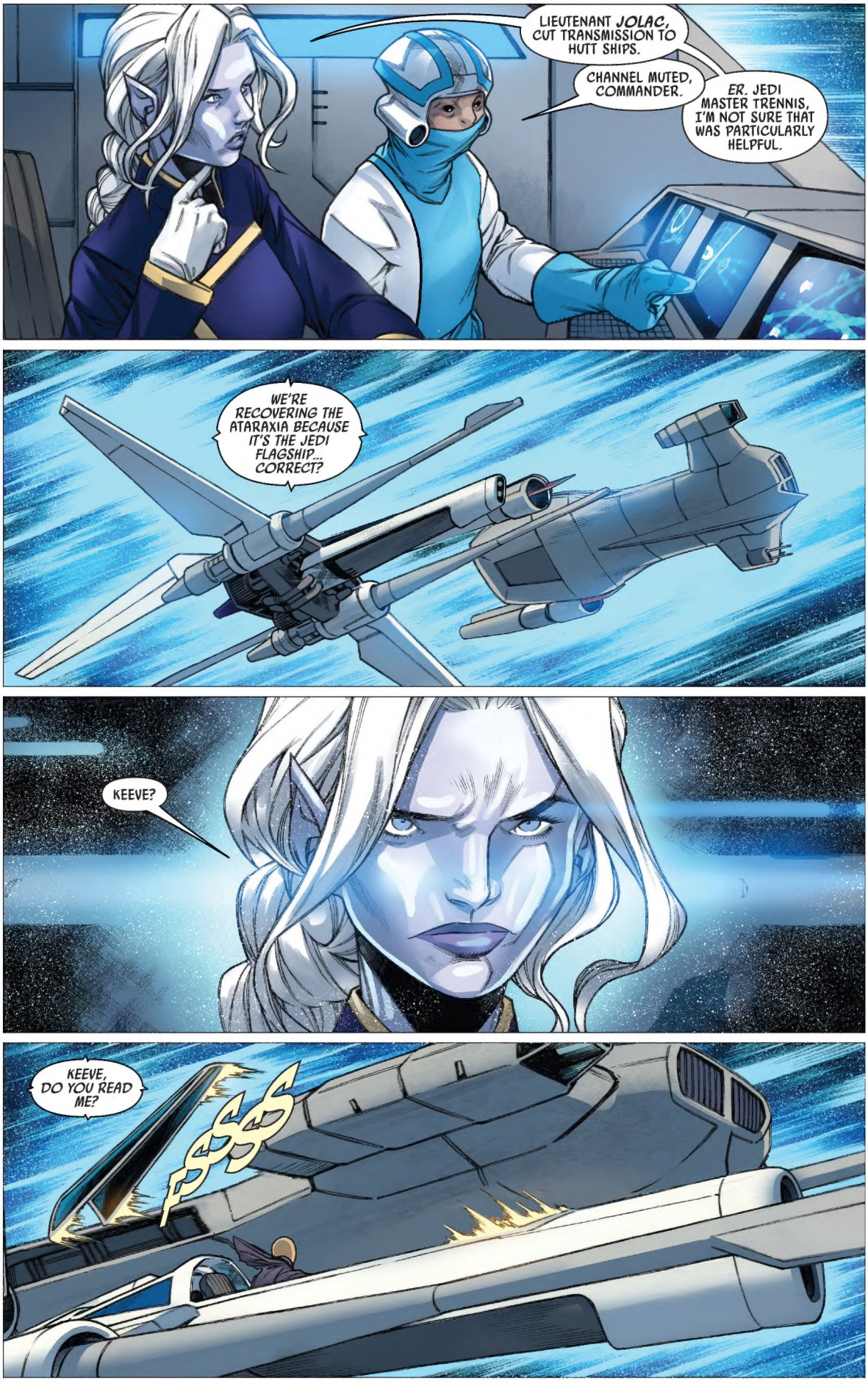
<SKARABDA, WHILE WE APPRECIATE THE ASSISTANCE, CAN YOU REMIND YOUR **SKIFF-FIGHTERS** THAT WE ARE TRYING TO **RECOVER** THE ATARAXIA... NOT **DESTROY** IT!>*

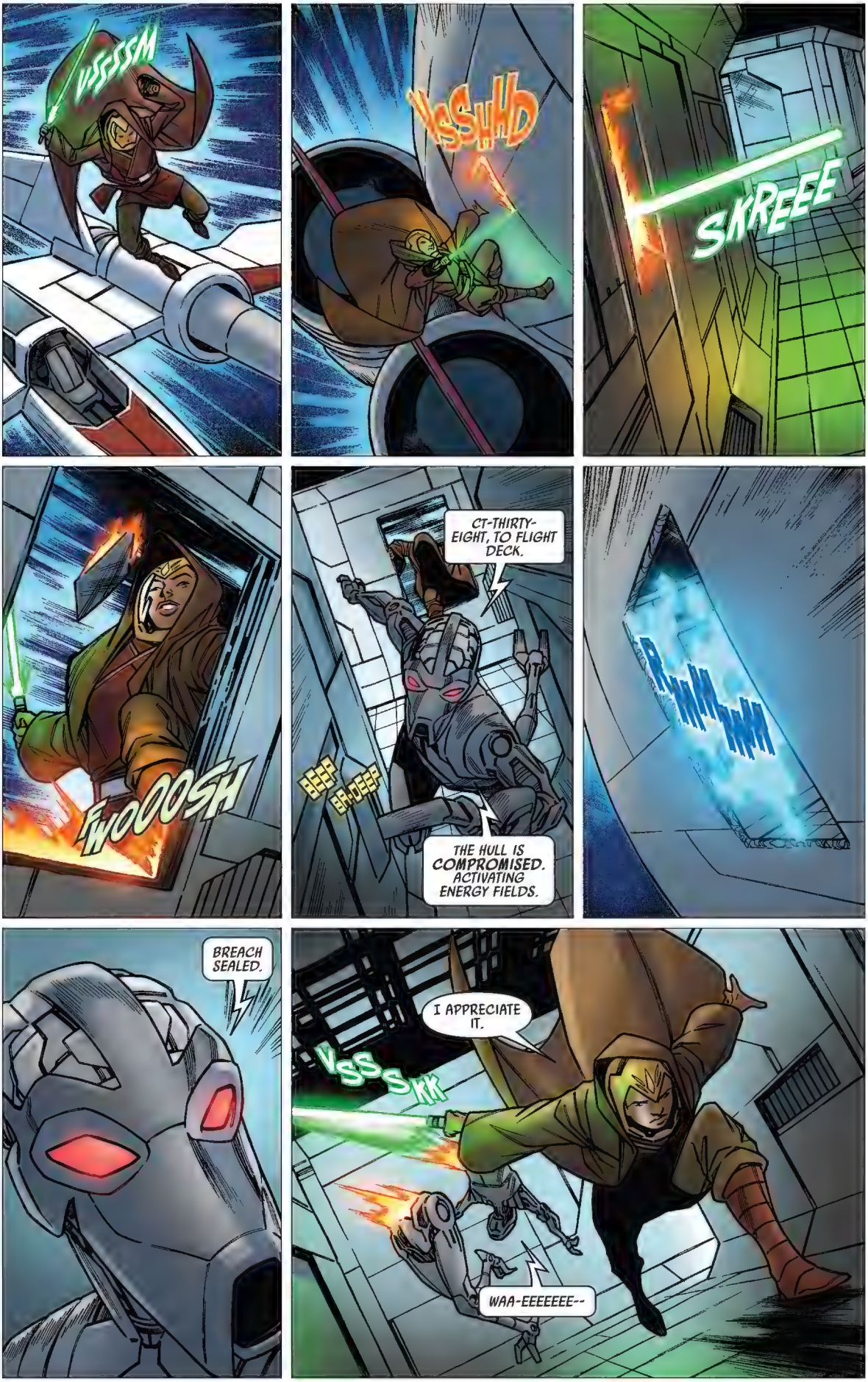
*TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.

NOW.
ABOVE BALLUM.

<YOU WILL HAVE TO FORGIVE THEIR EXUBERANCE, COMMANDER JAHEN. IT SEEMS LIKE ONLY FIVE MINUTES AGO THAT WE WERE MORTAL ENEMIES.>
<THAT'S BECAUSE IT WAS FIVE MINUTES AGO, YOUR EMINENCE, MORE OR LESS.>
<AND I'M STILL NOT CONVINCED THAT THE HUTT CARTEL WILL HONOR YOUR DECISION TO RELINQUISH THEIR CLAIM ON THIS SECTOR.>
<WE HAVE A COMMON FOE IN THE NIHIL, COMMANDER.>
<ESPECIALLY AFTER YOU SQUASHED THE NIHIL ENVOY.>
<I AM SURE THE RULING FAMILIES WILL SUPPORT A NEW ERA OF COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR PEOPLE...>

<...AS EXEMPLIFIED BY MY LENDING OF A SKIFF-FIGHTER TO ONE OF YOUR OWN JEDI AFTER THE LOSS OF THEIR OWN CRAFT.>
<A GESTURE THAT WILL NOT GO UNNOTICED, ADMINISTRATOR SKARABDA.>
<IF ONLY WE COULD HAVE ASSISTED IN SAVING THE NIHIL'S BESERKER ON THE BATTLEFIELD, JEDI TEREC.>
<"THEIR REVELATION THAT A *TRANDOSHAN JEDI* IS STILL AT LARGE BEHIND ENEMY LINES WAS INTRIGUING, WAS IT NOT? I WONDER IF YOU WILL MOUNT A RESCUE MISSION?">
<EVEN IF THAT WAS ANY OF YOUR CONCERN, ADMINISTRATOR, ENTERING THE NIHIL OCCLUSION ZONE IS IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT AN OPERATIONAL PATH DRIVE...>
<SUCH AS THE ONE CURRENTLY FITTED TO YOUR STOLEN CRAFT.>
<WHY DO YOU THINK WE'RE TRYING TO TAKE IT BACK, SKARABDA?>
FOR STARS' SAKE!


LIEUTENANT JOLAC, CUT TRANSMISSION TO HUTT SHIPS.
CHANNEL MUTED, COMMANDER.
ER. JEDI MASTER TRENNIS, I'M NOT SURE THAT WAS PARTICULARLY HELPFUL.
WE'RE RECOVERING THE ATARAXIA BECAUSE IT'S THE JEDI FLAGSHIP... CORRECT?
KEEVE?
KEEVE, DO YOU READ ME?
PSSS


VSSSSM
VSSHD
SKREEE
FWOOOSH
CT-THIRTY-EIGHT, TO FLIGHT DECK.
BEEP BEEP
THE HULL IS COMPROMISED. ACTIVATING ENERGY FIELDS.
RWWWWWW
BREACH SEALED.
I APPRECIATE IT.
VSSSKK
WAA-EEEEEEE--

THIRTY-EIGHT?
THIRTY-EIGHT, RESPOND. WHAT IS YOUR STATUS?
SHE'S IN *PIECES*, LOURNA--
--LIKE YOUR ESCAPE PLAN.
ALL UNITS. CONVERGE ON THE JEDI'S POSITION.
BLAST HER TO THE *NIGHTLANDS!*
ZATT
ZATT

IT'S BREAKING ORBIT.
THRUMM
ENGAGE TRACTOR BEAM.
VRRMM
NNN! FULL POWER TO ENGINES, KEW-FOR.
BUT, MISTRESS LOURNA--
JUST DO IT. IF THEY WON'T LET US LEAVE--
"--WE'LL TAKE THEM WITH US."
ROAAR

NYAH!
THEY'RE PULLING US WITH THEM, COMMANDER!
FULL REVERSE. ALL THRUSTERS.
GREEK!
IT'S NO GOOD, MISTRESS LOURNA. THE SUPERSTRUCTURE WON'T TAKE IT.
WE'LL BE TORN IN TWO!
THEN WE NEED TO OFFLOAD SOME BALLAST.
BEEP
FSSSSM
WHOOSH

VSSSSKKK
KEEVE TO GIOS. LOURNA HAS JETTISONED CARGO.
WE SEE IT. TRYING TO DISRUPT THE TRACTOR BEAM--
NO, IT'S MORE THAN THAT. I SENSE...FEAR COMING FROM THE CONTAINERS.
SCAN THE CARGO, JOLAC.
SCANNING, COMMANDER.
"CONFIRMED. MULTIPLE LIFE-FORMS DETECTED WITHIN THE CONTAINERS."
LIFE-FORMS?
SHE WAS HAULING PEOPLE? ON A JEDI SHIP?

KILL THE TRACTOR BEAM. <SKARABDA, DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?>
<THIS HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ME, COMMANDER JAHEN...OR THE CARTEL, FOR THAT MATTER. A LITTLE SIDE PROJECT FOR MY FORMER ENFORCER, PERHAPS?>
A SIDE PROJECT...
GIOS, OPEN YOUR HANGAR BAYS. TEREC, AI-DAN YELOOC--
WE'LL USE THE FORCE TO MANEUVER THEM INSIDE BEFORE THEIR OXYGEN RUNS OUT.
ALREADY AHEAD OF YOU, MY FRIEND.
"BUT WHAT ABOUT LOURNA DEE?"

LOURNA DEE WILL SEE YOU IN HELL, JEDI!
MAYBE SOONER THAN YOU THINK, TRAITOROUS HEADTAIL.
SKARABDA.
SURRENDER OR DIE, DEE.
ACTUALLY, I'LL TAKE THE THIRD OPTION--
ZAA-KROOM
--AND TAKE YOU WITH ME!

WE'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE, LOURNA.
STOP RUNNING AND SURRENDER WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE.
SURRENDER?
SOUNDS LIKE YOU DON'T KNOW ME AT ALL.
KRAKKLE
SEE, THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG. I'VE READ YOUR FILES.
HOW YOU WERE TRAFFICKED AS A CHILD. SOLD INTO SLAVERY BY SOMEONE YOU TRUSTED. LOVED EVEN.
AND NOW YOU DO THE SAME TO OTHERS. HAVE YOU LEARNED NOTHING?
ZOWW
I'VE LEARNED EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOU.

KEEVE TRENNIS. A JEDI WITH NO STOMACH FOR WAR. WHO STOPPED HER MARSHALL FROM KILLING ME WHEN SHE HAD A CHANCE.
I WON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE.
YOU'RE RIGHT, LOURNA.
WE'RE NOTHING ALIKE, YOU SEE--
"--I NEVER GIVE UP"
SWPP
WAIT. WHAT IS HAPPENING...?
NEVER CUT AND RUN.
KLIKK

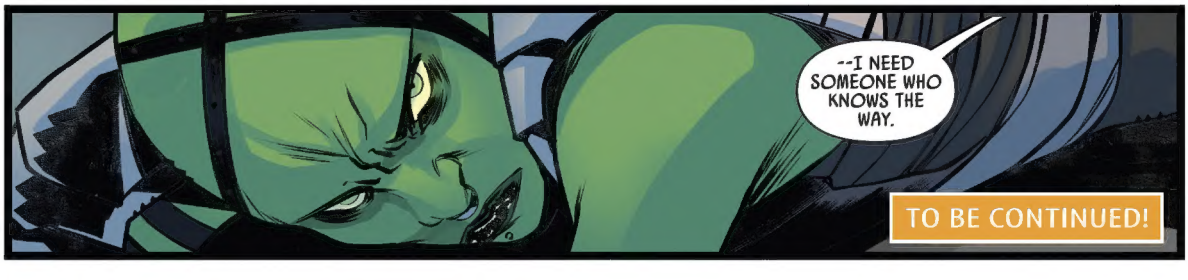
AAH!
ZOW
WAIT...THAT WASN'T ME! THAT WASN'T ME!
NO--
WSSHH
--IT WAS THE FORCE.
KLIK
ZOWW
COMMANDER JAHEN...THIS IS ATARAXIA. THE SHIP IS SECURED.
AS ARE THE CONTAINERS, MASTER TRENNIS.
AND THE PEOPLE--?

DR. GINO'LE IS SEEING TO THEM NOW.
LOOKS LIKE DEE FITTED LIFE-SUPPORT GENERATORS WITHIN THE UNITS. MAYBE SHE'S NOT SUCH A MONSTER AFTER ALL.
BUT TALKING OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, YOU DO KNOW YOUR CARGO DOORS ARE STILL OPEN, DON'T YOU? ARE THE ATARAXIA'S SYSTEMS--?
FULLY OPERATIONAL, VELKO. I'LL CLOSE THE DOORS--
--AS SOON AS CERET AND TEREC ARE ON BOARD.
VEOWW
CERET AND TEREC? THEY SHOULD BE RETURNING TO THE GIOS!
WE'RE AFRAID THAT WON'T BE HAPPENING, COMMANDER VELKO JAHEN.
JEDI YELOOC WILL ACCOMPANY YOU BACK TO THE CORE. WE HAVE OTHER BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO.
OTHER BUSINESS? WHAT THE HELL, TEREC?
WE'VE RECEIVED ORDERS TO RETURN TO CORUSCANT.

THE ONLY PLACE THE ATARAXIA IS HEADING IS INTO THE OCCLUSION ZONE.
THE ZONE?! KEEVE, NO--
YOU SAID IT YOURSELF, VELKO. WE NEED A PATH DRIVE TO CROSS THE STORMWALL. IF THERE'S EVEN THE SMALLEST CHANCE THAT SSKEER IS STILL ALIVE...

"NO ONE GETS LEFT BEHIND, COMMANDER.
"NOT THIS TIME."

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE PRISONER, KEEVE? WHAT OF LOURNA DEE?
OH, SHE'S COMING WITH US. IF WE'RE ABOUT TO PLUNGE HEADFIRST INTO ENEMY TERRITORY--

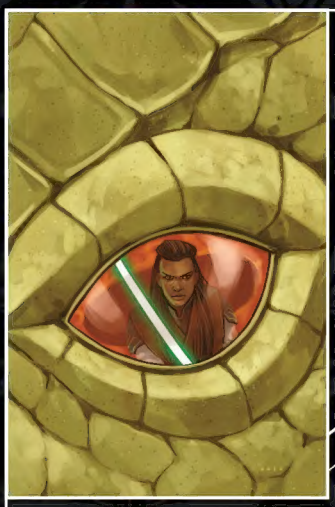

--I NEED SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE WAY.
TO BE CONTINUED!

NEXT ISSUE:

COMING SOON

By **Cavan Scott** & **Jim Towe**

Cover by **Phil Noto**



THE HIGH REPUBLIC #5

ON SALE IN MARCH

CHECKLIST

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- [x] THE HIGH REPUBLIC #2
- [x] THE HIGH REPUBLIC: SHADOWS OF STARLIGHT #3
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- [ ] THE HIGH REPUBLIC #10

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